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SUBJECT: CONGO-BRAZZAVILLE: CAMPAIGN UPDATE, 8 JULY

Opposition Games

1. (SBU) The Opposition Front on July 7 held its biggest rally in Brazzaville so far outside the Massamba-Debat Stadium not far from the Embas we had seen large numbers of opposition supporters wearing clothes emblazoned with images of their candidates.

2. (SBU) Dzon in his speech repeated the Opposition's call for a delay in the elections and for a "concertation" of all the presidential candi the elections to be delayed, he made no threat to boycott. He also asked supporters to refrain from protests in the street and from any action banging together pots and pans ("concert des casseroles"). None of the Americans or local staff heard any evidence of the "concert."

3. (SBU) FSN political assistant late on July 7 was told by Dzon spokesman Jean Keba that the government had agreed to postpone the elections. today, July 8, after a meeting between the police leadership and the presidential candidates to discuss how to avoid violence and disorder wher

Violence: So Far, So Good

4. (SBU) The opposition political rally and concurrent Sassou concert/rally of July 7 passed without incident-no one hurt and no arrests. The have consistently reassured RSO FSN assistant that with some 20,000 security force personnel mobilized throughout the country they will be able

5. (SBU) Comment: We are continuing to keep an eye out, but the lack of violence so far is striking. We were never expecting violence at a l earlier elections. The major militias that threatened the peace in past years are now disbanded and their leaders on the government's side. M morning-another good sign. But we have been expecting at least a little trouble and are pleasantly surprised at the calm, so far.

Government to Diplomats: This Will Work

6. (SBU) Minister of Foreign Affairs Basile Ikouebe convoked Ambassador for a one-on-one session on July 8, the day after Ikouebe and Minister will stay away from the polls, leave their homes and engage in civil disobedience; the police will maintain the peace and protect embassies.

7. (SBU) Ikouebe was particularly curious about opposition candidate Mathias Dzon's June 23-25 visit to the US and especially his meeting at t

8. (SBU) In the one-on-one, the Ambassador told Ikouebe that both the government and the opposition had made mistakes. Among them: the oppos around campaign spending, where one candidate seems to enjoy a tremendous financial advantage.

EASTHAM